

7-21-1867

Letter from Anne Whitney, Lausanne, Switzerland, 1867 July 21

Anne Whitney

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1) London July 21-1867

12

My dear Mother & Father & Sarah
I want to say bef. I forget it, that it is
a great waste of money to have brass covers
made for yr. trunks. I paid 10. in Malabar
for this ^{more than} ~~trunk~~ ^{immensity} wh. weighs some
3 or 4 or more pounds probably, & is fast-
going to pieces - when, doubtless a new
trunk might have been bought for not
much above the price of a cover. We
are having a trunk manufac^r. here
bound with iron & brass for the sum
of 36 frs. I conclude that it is best
to let a trunk take life naturally - if
it is worth covering only when it is an
excessively good one & in that case
it does not need another. (see).

Yr. trunks are not to be found at
the shops - & doubt if ordinarily other
kinds are made of lighter wood material
than the American trunks. Extreme
lightness can be had only at the expense
of strength - except when metal is used.
I think it is a destructive fallacy
that goods in general are cheaper here
than with us. The reputation for
cheapness was built up in a comparatively
primitive state of things bef. & hence
perhaps Ex. took to the road so
universally. There are a few things the
prices of wh. seem to be quite moderate
like silk in India for instance as we saw
them marked in the windows. All imported
fabrics of course are dearer in proportion
in Italy & Rome particularly those

manufactures are cheaper than at home. I do not think I know enough about home prices to be a judge in such matters but I believe that a good deal of money is spent abroad by people who are merely passing thro. on the reputation of foreign countries for cheapness, wh. wd. be spent to better purpose at home. America was the cheapest country bef. the war, I suspect that can be found this side of Africa & now the diff. in exchange produces a constant hallucination. I have to think it all out bef. I can be sure that I have not got a bargain.

This is a blessed climate. There is no winter in this year to speak of & a Summer as we find it is deliciously cool. It is curious to hear people speak of the hot weather as if there were any! It is a land in consequence juicy with honey & wine. The fer. storking vine, grass, the rich pasturage, where never, tho. we see no cows at gaze - the deep, heavy foliage of the groves about here is no forest - an perpetual eye-feast. It is a country in wh. people evidently know how to live. Beautiful homes with lawns & thick groves are scattered everywhere in & around the quaint & interesting city. We like the looks of the Swiss people, a very plain, homely people, every sort of whom seems to have something to do - but the poor old women look sadly overworked sometimes. All the stopping-places on the road from Berne to Fribourg we experienced the inevitable shocks of wh. all travellers in Switzerland must have at sight of the deformed throats & the vacant horrible faces of so many

2 of these dwellers among the valleys. The Gortre
as I have seen it, as a swelling more or less
large directly in the front of the throat. Two
or three generations of the Gortre are said to
be followed by the Gortre. There have been
a number of unsatisfactory reasons assigned
for this disease. The one that seems to me
most probably is the evanescent intermarriage
among these confined and people, by which
scrupulous distinctions originally imposed by
inefficient laws & bad living ^{generally} are
perpetuated & increased till they reach their
fatal culmination. Where thro. the opening
of the region & better knowledge & more pressing
the habits of the people have changed, the
disease is disappearing. We have recently seen
it about here. But we are told that the
novels of the Swiss people are very bad.
That like the country thro. every 3^d child
is illegitimate. If the facts are such it
~~perhaps~~ ^{implies} a ^{of moral} ~~corruption~~ ^{condition}.
Then the allowed & as it seems to be
debasement of men generally & the liberal
constitution of a ^{as in the} ~~class of~~ ^{country} ~~women~~ ^{flatishes}
can be as low as anything ~~or~~ ^{and} ~~any~~ ^{it}. It
is a rotten state of things wh. haunts litigation
in the public record when the facts are
such as they are in our cities & those of Europe.
No woman is pure in a society wh. has no
a claim without protest or endeavor the ~~best~~
obstruction moral & otherwise of a portion
of her sex or receives on equal terms more
as much & degrades as those outcast
women themselves. No one can come
to Europe, it seems to me, & look
with anything but the eye of a butterfly
on this Gortre civilization & not ache
& think that America is fast regaining

towards a like completion.

Last Tuesday, a royal morning, we took the train to Vitzthum & from there walked to Gerdachamps, where we did not much expect to find Fidelie, but did nevertheless. She is in a beautiful region of wooded mts. sides, where innumerable Mt. Stroms leap down to the lake. She has been very comfortably bestowed in a Swiss family, in a little house where there is nothing but a chocolate mill & the noise & debris of new buildings going on to prevent its being quite an Eden. About 6 miles this side of Vitzthum the Phoniars are boarding, but they were off at that time on a trip to Chamonix. Mary had not rec'd. my last letter, wrote a short time since. & knew nothing about our motions. The Riches have been in Germany until within the last week or two & are now at Lauterbrunnen but still unsettled all of wh. acct for the fact of not hearing from them. We with Fidelie intend to start next week to join them there, at L. Our object is to find a place where we may remain. Pension boarding houses in Switzerland, are not expensive, but hotels are & you can stay all a Pension for less than a week only at hotel prices. As that the Carriage Charges are by no means high - travelling is cheap. Not however as pure compared with our hotel prices in this high. I think 8 or 10 francs ^{at most} will cover a sufficiently ample entertainment. The journey from Rome to Paris ^{here} allows 5 nights or days for rests costs just about \$40.00 - (200 fr.) Fidelie is close by the castle of Chillon, & we visited it with her.

It is a strong fortress, older than 830 in wh. year it is somewhere written the French King imprisoned a certain Abbe in a castle from wh. only heaven the Alps & Lake Lemman were visible consequently this castle & no other. It is built in & out of the rock in the Lake & few feet from the shore to wh. it is united by a bridge. The massiveness of the structure & its picturesque situation are a pleasure to the eye, notwithstanding its association with General Duganay. The Duke of Savoy lived here & thin crimes against humanity perpetrated within the walls of the castle furnish it with an interest half painful half pleasant seeing that since slavery is abolished such human horrors will no longer be tolerated in the civilized world. First we entered by a slight descent, the darkness the floor of wh. is on a level with the waters of the lake & the windows, long, narrow & like a few inches wide are some 10 or 15 feet above from wh. indeed, looking up one sees the Alps & heaven. But these windows are very handsome with double rows of Gothic arches divided by granite pillars - not enlivening, but never failing to fix the mind that must enjoy the sense of obscurity & excellent proportion that such things convey. Each of these pillars has an iron ring near the base of it & to these rings the prisoners were attached by chains the length of wh. is in some cases indicated by the wearing away of the rocky floor within the tether of the victim. In one of these pillars some 3 or 400 years ago, Francis Bonivard was confined for a period of 6 years. A prisoner who had by some opposition incurred the hostility of the Duke. At the end of that time, we read

he was set free by the Swiss troops & lived to be 75 years old. In one part of the dungeon too dark & penetrable a beam extends from pillar to wall, & wh. victims were brought from the hell of justice above over the stone steps to death. In the room above is a square hole a ft. wide, in the floor from wh. 3 rude steps descend, left rough-hewn in the rocky wall. Below these nothing is seen - We were told that it went sheer down 800 feet to the bottom of the lake. (I think there is mistake somewhere) - If the meaning of those steps had not been explained we shd. have known & of course you so. So why shd. I diminish the scaly horror of the tale by writing it? In another place we saw a charred wooden pillar & at the top thereof an iron pulley. Here was where prisoners were drawn up & tortured till they confessed, lies or truth, no matter wh. & so it was what was wanted of them. We saw the Duke's Chamber, overlooking the Country & the Archdeacon's Chamber commanding the Mts. & Lake - pretty rude both. The finest rooms are 3 large halls - dining halls & kitchens, or both & one a reception room. In each is a fireplace as broad as our little room & half as deep or less with a crane extending from ch. to end. & ceiling & doors carved in oak. That was a pleasant excursion to a Buller & I shd. like to make it again.

Everywhere we find the English-mouthed ladies & like them - but as yet few Americans of any. But we see a host of names registered in the various papers. One of the boarders brought us the London Times & read. It is full of fetters - Royalty is buzzing all over the land. I have just read the acct. of May's death. A good deal of sympathy

is expended on him - Some call his death an assassination - It seems to me calm & heroic & dignified & just. As just an award as condemned royalty ever received at the hands of an enraged people. I trust France will let pity on the Mexicans now & open to them a career worthy of the courage & determination they have shown here. Louis Rep. we need all betw. the obsequies of May with great pomp & show the Mexican crown of Guadalupe on the occasion! Thrilling! ~~The world~~ I think he wd. wear to many Mexican orders not slight flowers in the face of the poor and poor brother. I do not think I ever spoke to you of a young Mexican who was visiting at the Mannings once when I was there. He was a fine young fellow very manly & intelligent & I recollect having some pleasant conversations with him. He was a student at New Haven & had come home with Henry & passed the vacation. This year his name was Major & he was a son of the Mex. General who was shot with Allen. But this event the brave fellow wd. not live to know. Some time ago Mrs. Manning wrote that the treason of the father had so wrought upon the mind of his son that the Committee Suicide. Sunday July 21. Such a beautiful day! I have again lost the run of the oranges & I do not know in wh. house the Putnams are stirring this A.M. It is our church time & I am so scarcely thinking of going over to church at present! These hills always seem prepared for divine service & occasionally a church sometimes with sometimes not but almost always a small & the life suggests the narrower worship

of creeds. The noble old Cathedral at
Laudanum wh. was ~~dis~~ created some
centuries ago by the Pope himself is a
protestant church now - episcopal probably.
There is an english church here - but as
Mr. Weiss doesn't preach there & some
stuff ~~else~~ ^{elsewhere} doubts does, I stay at
home. The Swiss troops are out parading
& the music is fine - Such a quiet place
as this is! After the Italian cities! for
such scenes & bowlers as that tongue
fathers you cannot conceive. Thank
the stars our new home on the Pincian's
brow will be clear of that affliction.
About there are no entre-soles or half
stories but send their breathless dwellers
into the street for society & recreation.
Our delightful Pincian ^{here} has no horse
outside of it - it is the last - & all beyond
is a beautiful park extending along the
towards the lake out towards the ^{grand} ~~view~~
fields & groves. Our windows do not face
the lake tho we see it - but the west where
a great fertile country ^{like a garden} leads to the foot
of the Mts. It is a country suggest-
ing the rich quiet of Autumn afternoon.
A "haunt of ancient peace" Edw. W.
like this land, so said. You dear Sarah
I am not sure that all of you wd. not.
You - Father & Mother. Whenever the
forest is cut new trees are planted. I
do not think the desolation that follows
in the track of our railroad is to be feared
here - the many of the Mts. are rugged &
bare -

Yesterday Morning we took the train for
Le Tour where the Charnots are - we found
them only the night bef. returned from the
where have been gone 5 days - ^{loophole} remarkably
well & bright - We had a very pleasant
day with them & took a lovely drive

along the shore in the P.M. Mr. & Mrs. Leshy
are in the next house. They board a
small person on the borders of the lake
& near of the mts. just across. but their
rooms are not high enough to my mind to
get the full benefit of the situation &
I shd. prefer our boarding house to theirs.
But the region is beautiful & I am not
sure that we shall find anything better.
Charles says, nothing so good. We went
to see more however. The Bernese Oberland
& Grindelwald where one can sniff a glacier.
I must give up Mr. Clark, tho' from here
the journey is not long. The Pransons are
getting a great many nice photographs.
Photographs are better & often cheaper
cheaper than at home. Might I look
up Stomascapas & portfolios! Henry
thinks that pictures such as Mrs. Chambers
bought in Rome for 40, are not cost 1/2 as much.
You know Byron's poem of a superb
view about Lake Como. They are in
Chil. Harold's. They came to my mind the
other night when we had a pretty smart
shower with wind & thunder. This is the
place where "Jove answers from his
misty shroud back to the prayers of
that cell in her cloud". Jove is a long
mt. not showing for its actual height
lying along the north west of the lake &
opposite on the S.E. side rise the snowy
peaks of the Alps. The Dent de Mide is
upwards of 13000 feet - Mt. Pilate wh.
lies to the S. of us can be seen from a
point in the neighborhood not far off.
The water of the lake is very beautiful in
color varying with the hour & the weather.
Mrs. A.M. & her family came up with

Co. & we enjoyed sitting on our beautiful
terrace for an hour or so. Two friendly
cows took the 5 o'clock dinner sent them away
so early, they being dried. If we do not
find the places bad, we are going forward,
in pairs or otherwise, for stopping we
may return here & go into their neighborhood.
We start tomorrow at 9 A.M. I have
been hoping ever since last Friday to get
letters from home by way of Rome. It will
be a fortnight tomorrow since a letter had
been arrived there for me, & Mr. Crocker is
very prompt. I am, he's just written & sent
a letter to you in which he has written given
you some notes of their delightful trip to
Mt. Blanc. Henry is packing. The weather
yesterday & today is almost as warm as some-
day I had known at Rome.
Interlaken. Friday. The ride from Lucerne
to Lake Thun & the boating from one end
of the lake to the other were somewhat better
perhaps than anything we have had here. The
country along the railroad constantly reminded
us of home. New England. But when we
arrived at Lake Thun the Mts. burst upon
us - & here we are, as surrounded as at the
Profile House at Barcelona. We find the
Richards very pleasantly situated. When the
clouds lift - the Jungfrau shows out in her
mantle of snow. Whether we go on to
Lauterbrunnen or remain here a few days
is still in debate. I want to go on in order
to settle somewhere. & that is no place
it being full of hotels & all pretty well
crowded. The house which we are in, full of
Germans. I do not know any other address
to give than the same as the last. Lucerne
Canton Road, Care of Sigismund Marcel.
I long to hear from you. & my chief consolation
is that you must hear regularly from me
if the mails are true. Dear love to you all.